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LABOUR'S COLONIAL POLICY

THIS year's Party Conference at Blackpool gave still more decided evidence of the new weight given by the Party to our colonial responsibilities. Two large meetings exclusively devoted to colonial affairs were held during the week, and the Conference itself spent almost a full session on debating Labour's colonial policy.

The allocation of time to the colonies on this scale makes a welcome contrast to the considerable neglect which has been shown in the past. It was encouraged by the publication of the Party's stimulating pamphlet on 'The Plural Society' and by the fact that forty-eight local parties and organisations sent in Commonwealth and colonial resolutions

this year.

The debate itself was notable on three counts. First, Tom Driberg, in introducing the first of the Party's colonal pamphlets, outlined the clear line of policy to be followed by the next Labour Government in deaing with the vexed problem of those colonies which have mixed racial societies. This is the first time that any British political party has stated its ultimate objective in these colonies and the methods by which it hopes to achieve its aim.

Secondly, the Party was informed of two measures of colonial policy which have already been achieved. There was loud applause—and quite rightly so—when Jim Griffiths announced that the two-year effort of the Party to put things right in Bechuanaland had been crowned with the success of jostling the Government into reversing its policy and allowing Seretse Khama to return home Warm enthusiasm also greeted Mr. Griffith's announcement that the Party has given £5,000 to the new Caribbean Federal Labour Party. The Seretse issue shows how the Labour Movement can change history, even whilst in opposition; the

Caribbean gift is welcome evidence that the Party recognises the importance of developing socialist parties in the colonies and giving practical aid.

Finally, Mr. Griffiths, in what was one of the finest speeches of his career, called the Labour Movement to meet the challenge of the underdeveloped peoples of the world. He pledged the next Labour Government, as had Mr. Gaitskell previously, to allocate at least one per cent of the British National income each year to aiding the poorer peoples of the world. This plea for international social justice met with an enthusiastic response from the Conference; but Mr. Griffiths sounded a sharp note of warning. Unless we are prepared to go without ourselves, he said, we should not pass resolutions or make promises; and unless we are prepared to defend a Labour Government's policy in providing other peoples with some of the wealth we could use ourselves, we should not give hypocritical applause.

It may well be that on the answer by the Labour Movement to this challenge the future of Britain itself and the peace of the world will depend.

It is becoming increasingly recognised that the British people are standing at a cross-roads. The foundations on which we built our economic strength in the past have crumbled away and cannot be rebuilt. Our present comparatively high standard of living as a nation is directy threatened. We are facing the moral and physical collapse which has been the fate of all previous empires.

Yet the British people have a unique opportunity to save themselves from the fate of previous nations. We have already begun to transform an Empire into a Commonwealth. In so doing we are salvaging our political influence by substituting philosophical supports for those which were previously based on physical force. Economic salvation lies in the same direction. By developing a free economic association with the colonial peoples on the same lines as our happier political experiments—as in the Gold Coast and West Indies—we can not only meet the moral challenge of our time but also find economic hope. Giving a part of our national wealth to the colonial peoples is, therefore, not only an important psychological and political gesture, but also an investment in a new equal and voluntary economic community.

The Labour Party can find the imagination and the moral fervour to lead this new chapter in British history. To do so adequately demands that it shall devote ever increasing resources to constant work on the problems involved. There are no grounds for complacency, but we welcome the signs of the new spirit with which the Party is approaching this challenge, and hope that it

will be continually strengthened.

BREAKTHROUGH IN TRINIDAD

THE 1956 General Election in Trinidad, resulting in a surprise victory for one of the numerous parties contesting the election, should prove a turning-point in the colony's political development. The People's National Movement, led by Dr. Eric Williams, won 13 of the 24 seats up for election in September and its success was decisive enough to cause the Governor to call upon Dr. Williams to become Trinidad's first Chief Minister and to form the island's first party government. Because there are still nominated members in the single-chamber legislature (five unofficials and two officials), the P.N.M. is in an overall minority, but the appointment of nominated members sympathetic to its cause should give Dr. Williams the parliamentary support he requires, while probably necessitating the pursuit of a moderate, middle-of-the-road policy for the time being. The election brought about the defeat also of Mr. Albert Gomes who, for the past ten years, has been one of the dominant political figures in the Caribean. Mr. Gomes, who has never had solid party backing, may find it difficult to regain his former prominence, but Dr. Williams is as fervent a supporter of Caribbean Federation and more in sympathy with the views of other Caribbean leaders such as Mr. Norman Manley of Jamaica, who hailed his success as a 'breakthrough' for progressive forces, and Mr. Grantley Adams of Barbados. Of the other parties in the new Legislative Council, the People's Democratic Party, which draws its main support from the Indian element in Trinidad's population, has five seats: the Butler Party, a working-class organisation three; and the Trinidad Labour Party, two. One independent candidate only was elected. Thus, the age of parties has succeeded that of personalities in Trinidad and, although Dr. Williams has one former Council member only among his colleagues, there seems every hope that the foundations of parliamentary government will now be firmly laid.

KENYA EUROPEAN ELECTION

THE first thought which strikes a political observer in this country on looking at the Kenya Legislative Council election results is the extraordinarily narrow base on which the European members rest. The total number voting for the thirteen contested seats was 12,659, not more than in a minor municipal borough or large urban district in this country. The average poll was a little more than 1,000 per constituency and six of the members returned received fewer than 500 votes apiece. The highest poll was recorded in the Nairobi South constituency where Mr. Harris was successful against two opponents with a vote of 927 out of 2192; while at the other end of the scale in the Coast constituency Mr. Cook won with 167 votes out of a grand total of 306. The atmosphere in which the election took place is exemplified by the passage in the 'Kenya Weekly News' which we quote below.2

This background explains how closely personal European politics in Kenya must be. It is true that parties were in the field formally for the first time. Neither the Federal Independence Party, advocating apartheid, nor Capricorn, standing for a fully integrated society by stages, came near winning any seats. The main battle was between the two central groups, led by Mr. Michael Blundell and Group Captain Briggs, who won eight out of the fourteen European seats. The former accepts the Lyttelton plan of a fixed number of European, African and Asian ministers. The latter does not refuse to accept non-European ministers, but has said that they should be appointed, if at all, on merit, not by quota. As however, the Lyttelton plan cannot be changed before 1960, except by agreement of all races, his present majority does not affect the issue. In other respects, there is a difference of emphasis, but hardly of principle, between the two. Willy-nilly, Mr. Blundell and his friends have had to come out against any relaxation in the White Highlands, against common schools or hospitals, even by stages, and against a common roll, the moderates being pushed further and further to the right under the fire of their opponents.

That the differences between the two groups are much slighter than might have been thought while the contest was on, has been made clear by subsequent events. On 11th October it was announced

¹ October 5th, 1956.

that they had resolved to discard all group or party affiliations and to work together freely 'with the object of achieving moderate and constructive policies.' Later an official statement was issued revealing that, in common with the African and Asian unofficial members of the Legislature, they had agreed to amendments in the composition of the House and the Council of Ministers which have been accepted by the Secretary of State. These changes include the addition of two representative African members to the Opposition side of the House and two other 'corporate' members who will, it is expected be Europeans. The Council of Ministers is to be enlarged by increases in the number of European Ministers from three to four, and of African Ministers from one to two. To many this may well seem a volte face on the part of the Briggs group.

In the Asian and Arab section with seven seats, the numbers were more realistic, though the voting was still largely personal. The one minister standing, Mr. Nathoo (Muslim), had the largest majority in the election. The other Asian minister, Mr. A. B. Patel, has retired from public life, to the great

loss of all races in Kenya.

The African elections in March will take on a cynical tone, after the speeches of the victorious European candidates. We can only repeat that some kind of common roll, super-imposed at first on the communal franchise, offers the only hope of genuine partnership in Kenya. Without it, white and black racialism will harden, positions will be taken up and the gap will become impossible to bridge.

² The drape-suited burghers of Nairobi are running true to form. In the most vital election in the history of this colony which, by some strange trick of geography happens to include Nairobi, in the only European election that has been fought on controversial issues and outstanding differences of opinion, only 4,817 people voted out of a European population which is now estimated at something between 19,000 and 20,000. Only 8,256 Nairobi citizens were in fact on the voters' roll.

Some of them were doubtles dead, others were civil servants, more were just plain apathetic and a few spoilt their papers. The latter included the wit who brought a loud guffaw of laughter to the hard-working election officers of Nairobi West by writing across his paper: 'None fit for Legislative Council.' Others in Nairobi, of course, are not entitled to vote and they include the city's very large community of foreign nationals.

All the same, 4,817 recorded out of a population of nearly 20,000! Strewth! The average poll in the three Nairobi electoral areas was just 58 percent, of the total voters' roll.

Functions of the C.D.C.

The Overseas Resources Development Act which became law in August validates certain projects of the Colonial Development Corporation, principally housing schemes, which had been declared ultra vires and re-defines the functions of the Corporation, including its functions in relation to the Central African Federation. In the debate on the Bill, the Rt. Hon. John Hare, Minister of State, said that in order not to deprive N. Rhodesia and Nyasaland of C.D.C. assistance in matters now transferred to the Federal field, the Federation as a whole was being included in the Corporation's area of operation, although permission to operate in S. Rhodesia would be given only for schemes which would assist projects in the northern territories.

Mr. Aneurin Bevan thought legal doubts might have been deliberately generated as an excuse to limit the powers of the Corporation, which the Conservatives had never liked. The Labour Government had always intended that the Corporation should initiate and manage physical schemes, but more and more it had taken on the form of a finance corporation, lending money at cheap rates to firms to exploit colonial possessions and then clearing out. The original intention had been for the C.D.C. to take the initiative and undertake projects of social value but unattractive to private enterprise and to work in partnership with colonial governments or private enterprise. There were circumstances where private capital should be assisted, but there was now a lack of balance and the Corporation's activities were not being directed sufficiently towards the other projects contemplated by the 1948 Act. The Opposition was concerned about the responsibility of the Federal Government in Central Africa to Parliament for C.D.C. activities in S. Rhodesia. He sympathised with the idea that colonial governments should obtain finances outside the purpose of this Bill from some other source than the Corporation. He would prefer Government-to-Government relationships.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd said that when the Labour Government set up the C.D.C. they included the making of loans among its powers. The present Government accepted the Corporation's view that a reasonable proportion of finance house business was necessary for the Corporation to fulfil its statutory obligation to break even, taking one year with another.

COLONIAL STUDENTS IN LONDON

There are about 15,000 students from other countries studying in London, and the British Council, which is responsible for housing many of them, especially those from the Colonies, has announced that it plans to double the size of its London lodgings register which at present contains 3,600 addresses. The Council has appointed Miss M. L. Harford, O.B.E., to publicize the need for and increase the number of suitable lodgings. Organisations and individuals who would like to help should get in touch with Miss Harford at the British Council, 65 Davies St., W.1.

Co-operation in the British West Indies

By A. BONNER*

GENERALISATIONS on the West Indies are bound to be misleading: each territory is unique, differing in social structure, economic circumstances and to some extent in racial stock. All however are confronted by the problems of unemployment, increasing population and widespread poverty. As the result of the British connection, they share a common language, elements of law, and among the educated classes a culture and outlook very British, although the influence of the U.S.A. is growing. In every territory visited, I found a warm-hearted, hospitable people, capable of great enthusiasm for social ideals and a fair proportion with a strong sense of social

responsibility.

Jamaica has the largest population of the West Indies. I visited it in 1951. There was then a variety of forms of co-operative society, credit, marketing, processing, supply, consumer and the interesting experiment of community estate farming at Lucky Hill. There had however been a good deal of enthusiasm which sometimes outran knowledge and Fundamental principles were resources. ignored, and there was lack of business method and caution. The Jamaican Co-operative Development Council stated in 1945, 'Persons with good intentions but inadequate knowledge and experience of the Movement may attempt to force co-operation too rapidly or to depart from approved methods and practices, and it can be ascertained that whenever fundamental principles are departed from, the movement has failed.

The Need for Supervision

There was need for a satisfactory legal basis and some authority to supervise, advise and to some degree control. This was provided by the Co-operative Law of 1949-50 and the establishing of a Coperative Department in 1950. Although the Department was staffed by exceptionally capable officials it was viewed with some apprehension and suspicion by a movement which was already in existence. I am not aware whether these feelings have subsided or not. Such a department, however, is necessary and yet the desire for independence and self-help must be welcomed and respected. They are not necessarily incompatible.

At present the largest number of societies and membership are in the Credit Unions, due largely to the zeal and energy of Father Sullivan, S.J. In 1954 these had nearly 9,000 members, a share capital of £150,000 and loans to members of £166,000. Credit unions are valuable but they are subject to limitations imposed by their structure which tends to prevent organic development into other forms of cooperation. Agricultural credit societies work in conjunction with the Agricultural Department and credit

is given according to an agreed farm development plan. This combines credit with education in improved agriculture. In 1954 loans amounted to £60,000. There are twenty-eight marketing societies, some concerned with poultry and eggs (the secondary society, the Jamaica Poultry and Farmers Co-operative Federation, took over the marketing operations from the government marketing department in 1954), tomatoes and coffee (two societies handle 80 per cent of the world-famous Blue Mountain coffee) and citrus fruits.

Problems of Consumers' Societies

Eighteen consumers' societies with a few exceptions continue to make heavy weather. The Spanish Town society is a notable exception. When I was there its committee seemed to have a good grasp of Rochdale principles and the resolution to adhere to them. The defects of most societies then and now were credit trading and poor management. Co-operative wholesaling is undertaken by the Jamaica Co-operative Union which although undercapitalised nevertheless handles the bulk of the trade for the retail societies. (Share capital £2,070; trade, £63,000; trade of retail societies, £99,700).

Trinidad, next in importance to Jamaica, was visited in 1954. It is less dependent on agriculture than the other territories, oil and petroleum products account for 75 per cent of its exports, only 25 per cent of its gainfully occupied population are engaged in agriculture. There are racial differences: East Indians form nearly half the population. Assimilation is difficult because of religious and cultural differences. Coperation may, however, provide common enterprises for all races and so reduce racial fears and suspicions.

The large wage-earning population has provided a good field for the credit unions. In 1954 there were 220 such societies in Trinidad with a share capital of \$1,096,000 and loans to members of \$1,107,000 (the dollar is worth 4s. 2d.). Consumers' societies progress slowly in Trinidad, although there is a flourishing consumer movement in Tobago. Insistence on the cash trading principle is held to be a handicap, but poor management and a shifting and unsettled male population should also be taken into account. Speaking of the West Indies generally there may be little consumer co-operative development until the interest and support of the women are obtained. Yet the success of the El Dorado consumers' society in Port of Spain shows what can be done given inspiration and good management.

There is of course a considerable peasant population in Trinidad and, as usual, credit needs are respossible for the formation of most societies. There were 400 agricultural credit societies in 1954 with loans to members of \$1,880,431.

Tobago, the small neighbouring island, has no industry, no racial difficulties (the population is almost

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entirely of African descent) and co-operation flourishes. This is largely due to a very active and capable co-operative officer and the interest shown and assistance given by some English retired business men and officials. With only 33,000 inhabitants there are various types of successful societies. 26 Agricultural societies, 22 credit unions, five consumer societies and four marketing societies. Tobago has the distinction of opening the first co-operative self service shop in the West Indies; its first day's trade amounted to \$1,000.

Barbados is one of the most densely populated parts of the world—1,319 people to the square mile. Two-thirds of its cultivated area grows sugar cane. Most of this is estate cultivation, but in 1946 there were 30,752 peasant holdings. Most of these were so small that only three per cent were subject to fulltime cultivation. They provide a small supplementary income and some degree of security. In the main they are devoted to sugar cane, which is a convenient crop, easily sold to the factories, not requiring the skill and attention of fruit and vegetables, although the economy of the island would probably be better served if the holdings were used to produce food for the island's consumption. There is little opportunity for co-operative development either marketing or credit under these conditions. The credit union movement is becoming well-established, although consumers' societies have probably the best prospects in the long run, but they have only made a beginning. Barbados suffers from the lack of a Co-operative Department, there is a capable Co-operative Officer, but he has other and prior duties with the Agricultural Department which prevent him giving the time and attention necessary to the pioneer work required.

In the Leeward Islands of Antigua, St. Kitts and Nevis there are tentative attempts at co-operation and considerable interest is shown. There is scope and need for co-operation particularly when what has been done in Tobago is borne in mind, but there is no co-operative officer or department.

In the Windward Islands of Grenada and St. Vincent the lack of a Co-operative Law and Department has been a similar hindrance. The deficiency has been remedied this year. There is real need in each island for various types of co-operatives. St. Vincent has a peasantry with initiative. I visited a group at Troumaca who had not only raised the capital for an arrowroot factory but had built the factory themselves. With a good legal basis and the right kind of advice the prospects of co-operative development in these islands is good.

Co-operative Development in B.G.

Lastly there is British Guiana. At present this is an interesting, even exciting colony for any student of social development. The Government is active and vigorous in promoting a variety of schemes of economic and social improvement. It is a poor country. Most of the population is found in a narrow coastal strip, below sea level, about 10 miles wide and 270 miles long. This is mainly used in the cultivation of sugar and rice. "Every acre has been the scene of a

struggle with the sea in front and the flood behind. As a result of the arduous labour of two centuries, a narrow strip of land along the coast has been rescued from the mangrove swamp by an elaborate system of dams and dykes... At first sight the narrow line of sugar estates seems but a poor showing for such a long struggle with nature, but when all the circumstances are taken into consideration, it is almost a wonder that the colony is not abandoned altogether."

Transport and communications are difficult and expensive. The population of 495,000 consists of the descendants of African slaves and of Indian indentured labour.

Co-operatives on the Sugar Estates

Sugar is the most important crop and is cultivated on 17 large estates most of which are controlled by one firm. A good deal of welfare work is done for the workers on these estates and consequently they regard the estates as responsible for the solution of all their problems. They lack the self help and initiative to undertake constructive social improvements themselves. One solution is the formation of consumers' societies. The British Guiana Sugar Producers' Association appointed Mr. A. Hemstock, an experienced British co-operator, to undertake the establishing of such societies. A society is being formed on each estate. Membership is of course voluntary and with the exception of credit, all the Rochdale principles are observed. Each society is a genuinely independent organisation owned and controlled by its membership. Already they want to establish a wholesale society. These estate societies may well form the basis for the development of consumers' cooperation in British Guiana.

Rice is grown mainly by peasants, who are often exploited by the owners of padi mills but this abuse is likely to be ended by the large modern mills being provided by the British Guiana Rice Marketing Board, a government organisation. The board is the sole purchaser of rice and undertakes all the functions of marketing. Credit is the principal and most urgent need and a very capable and efficient Co-operative Department appears to recognise this and to concentrate upon it.

In 1954 the Government decided to make the Thrift and Credit societies the vehicle for short term agricultural credit, loans being made to these societies by the British Guiana Credit Corporation, another government organisation. The societies increased from 63 to 141, membership from 3,300 to 8,500, share capital from £13,750 to £25,708. Loans increased from £10,922 to £102,901 (£72,917 from the Credit Corporation). At the end of 1955, there were 513 societies with a membership of 27,000.

There are many interesting co-operative enterprises which bear witness to the will and ability to co-operate and to the readiness of the Government to assist and encourage group efforts of people to help themselves. Co-operative enterprise is not only a means of meeting economic needs but of doing so in a way which promotes desirable social and political advance.

¹ History of British Guiana: Redway.

By COI

IN the history of the last thousand years there can be few things more remarkable than the transformation of Indo-British relations that took place in the early years after World War II. The aroused nationalism brought on by the humiliation of Europeans in Asia after 1941 by the Japanese should logically, after 1945, have led to a bitter clash between Britain and India. In fact, as the world now knows, in a few short months Mr. Attlee and Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Nehru and Lord Louis Mountbatten changed the possible disastrous clash between East and West into a fruitful partnership. In the Commonwealth in the years after 1947 India and Britain showed nations in Europe and in Asia that history is not all made of hatred, prejudice and a failure to improve on the past. There were, of course, disagreements, as Britain criticised India over Kashmir, and Delhi complained to London about British neutrality in the face of the persecution of Indian citizens in South Africa. But the link held between these two nations, east and west, both democracies, both moderate, conciliatory countries. And the world was advantaged.

But since 1951, since the advent of a Conservative Government, slowly this friendship has been corroded. Paradoxically the deterioration was not so rapid whilst Sir Winston worked with Mr. Nehru in the Commonwealth. Old enemies, yet these two had a sense of history, a capacity to forgive and a great inner strength, and they both went to Harrow!

Seato and the Baghdad Pact

But even before Sir Winston handed on to Sir Anthony, the signs of strain in Indo-British relations were there. There was the thoughtless, pointless Conservative surrender to Mr. Dulles over SEATO. Sir Anthony Eden bound Britain to an organisation devoted to the defence of such reactionary areas as Thailand and South Vietnam. We cut ourselves off in SEATO from all the main currents of Asian thought and opinion. And Britain found herself an appendage of a sterile American policy in the Far East. Of course India's views, the leading Asian Commonwealth member, were ignored. Her concern at the increase of war-like tension on her doorstep was passed over as trivial by the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Anthony Eden. The Bagdhad Pact did not even have the excuse of being American inspired. The Conservative Government which had not learnt a lesson but had profited by the policy of the Labour Party in 1945, attempted to freeze the Near East to a pre-1939 fashion. Long after Mr. Kruschev and Marshal Bulganin changed from a fighting war to an economic drive, the new Prime Minister was talking about this northern tier as a barrier to the Soviet armies! India protested that as her flank in Asia had been threatened so this split in the Arab world for Western purposes would impair her

Near Eastern security. Whereas under the Labour Government India's views had high priority, now it seemed that Delhi ranked alongside, for Conservative cabinet purposes, Bagdhad, Saigon and Taipei. Goa was another test in 1955 for British friendship with India. Mr. Kruschev, his own colonies in the Soviet Union long since silenced, loudly proclaimed his support for India over Goa. Mr. Dulles, as might be expected, chose this moment to say that Goa was a province of Portugal. It might have been thought that Britain, which under Mr. Attlee had surrenderd all of the sub-continent, would have recognised the logic of events even under her present Government, backed India and urged Portugal to hand over. But after SEATO and the Bagdhad Pact, Sir Anthony Eden's cold shoulder to Delhi, his covert support of Portugal was perhaps only to be expected.

Goodwill fast Disappearing

So the great bank of goodwill built up between India and Britain between 1947 and 1951 has been slowly dissipated. The speed this last eighteen months has been breakneck. During the present crisis it has looked as though the breaking point might come. The partnership was ready to collapse into enmity. If the Conservative Government had gone to war against Egypt there is little doubt that India, albeit reluctantly, would have had to leave the Commonwealth, probably with Pakistan and Ceylon following suit. The Labour Party leaders along with a mass of common sense amongst ordinary people, at the last moment halted Sir Anthony Eden in his suicidal policy. If the Conservative Cabinet cared nothing for India's views, practically every Opposition leader gave Delhi priority. If the Times and the Express seemed ready to split the Commonwealth, the Manchester Guardian, the Daily Mirror and the Daily Herald certainly this summer were not ready to see India thrown out.

Now perhaps the fatal drift apart between India and Britain can be checked. And Mr. Gaitskell must take the lead. In Parliament and about Britain the betrayal of India by the Conservative Government must be attacked. The Conservatives seem to have reverted to type and the policy of pre-war years. If India can't be ruled it must be ignored. What the Labour Party now needs towards India is the spirit of Stafford Cripps and Mr. Attlee in the days of India's fight for independence. In India last year I found at Universities, in the Administration and amongst leading politicians all the time the question, 'Why does the Labour Party go along with SEATO and the Bagdhad Pact? Why does it remain silent over Goa? We prefer Fabians to Communists as friends and mentors, but you don't give us much encouragement.'

The span of the present Government is now obviously limited. But the Socialists in Britain dare not

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wait until their return to office to proclaim their intention to reverse completely the present policy of Sir Anthony towards India. A clear expression of Labour Party intention to work all out with India, Socialist-planned India under Mr. Nehru, would help Delhi hang on with the Commonwealth and in hope until the next election. Of course the visit of Lord Attlee to India as the guest of Mr. Nehru will help. But it will need more than just a visit of a few distinguished old friends to bring India and Britain together again. What is needed for one thing is a positive education programme in the Labour Party; we have to show up and emphasise the importance of India to us and the Commonwealth. The Labour Party might do well to try and establish, for example, inter-Commonwealth scholarships between India and Britain. What is needed is not only a continued opportunity for Indians to study here, but also opportunity for our post-graduate students in India, and more of our young scientists and technicians in India to help push forward the Five Year Plan. If Britain is not prepared to do so, Germany and Russia certainly are.

Over such matters as German re-armament, N.A.T.O. and the recognition of Communist China, it would be well to give priority to the link with India. For the bridge that Clement Attlee and Jawahalal Nehru built between London and Delhi was a brotherhood of East and West. It was a living testimonial that Europeans and Asians could work together. It was the pilot plan for friendship and brotherhood between Africans and Englishmen. It could have been the germ of reconciliation between Frenchmen and Arabs. But if India and Britain drift apart then the last and strongest link between Europe and Asia could be broken. India would find herseif forced back into the position of a purely Asian nation. And the continent itself could develop in a spirit of violent anti-westernism.

Effect on Emerging Nations

Of more immediate significance, good relations between India and Britain, harmony and understanding are essential to the future pattern of the Commonwealth. Emerging countries in the Commonwealth value this family of nations because it is a world association, embracing in equality all races and all continents, socialists for instance such as Norman Manley, Dom Mintoff or Lim Yew Hock. The fact that Indian leaders can sit down in Commonwealth conferences with Australians, Canadians and Englishmen gives this Association a worthwhile universality and progressive unity. But if India were to leave the Commonwealth or if relations were to become hostile and remote, then emerging countries in Asia like Malaya would have second thoughts. And in the West Indies, Indian membership gives a diversity and

a racial appeal essential to the willing adherence of this area to the Commonwealth. The Labour or Progressive governments of Trinidad, Jamaica, the Leewards, the Windwards and Barbados will be having their federal elections in 1958. Then they will decide to stay in or leave the Commonwealth. If India has quit the Commonwealth, by then the answer of the West Indies could easily be to quit too. In such a way the multi-racial pattern of the Commonwealth could be gravely damaged.

Then what of the views of the emerging African nations? There is no doubt that the policy of Mr. Nehru exercises a powerful influence amongst the developing African countries of the Commonwealth. In Delhi I met many young African students being trained in the Institute of African studies there. These useful, potential leaders of Africa, I found, were ready to follow the lead of Mr. Nehru. What

he decided, so would they support.

White Club or Multi-Racial Commonwealth?

Now what effect might a rupture of Indo/British relations have on the potential African Commonwealth members. What of Ghana next year? Will Dr. Nkrumah feel happy to be alongside Mr. Menzies and Mr. Strydom when Mr. Nehru and Mr. Bandana-raike have left? East and West Nigeria will get selfgovernment in 1957, probably Northern Nigeria and the Federal Government will reach the stage in 1959. Now a possible membership of the Commonwealth is one of the great appeals that binds Nigeria and Britain together. But a Commonwealth without Nehru would look too much like a white dominated backward-thinking Club. Working with India is for Britain not just, as some Conservatives think, tolerating Mr. Nehru's foibles. It is not, as Sir Anthony Eden apparently believes, barely concealing his regret at India's busy desire to see peace preserved and Arab unity enhanced in the Near East. At least the Labour Party should realise that co-operation with India is a sine qua non to the continuing existence of a multiracial Commonwealth. Labour Party leaders would do well to look to this future a little more. Suez, Mr. Dulles, Nina's hats, are all good debating stuff. But the real balance in the world's fortunes in the next fifty years will lie just as much in the relations, friendly or otherwise, of the Europeans and non-Europeans as between Capitalists and Communists. A British split with India could lead to the collapse in time of all European influence in what might become a negative and hostile continent.

But a strong voice, a firm hand of friendship towards Mr. Nehru and the Indian people can ensure not only the present Commonwealth, it can guarantee an expanding family of nations in all Continents. Africans, Europeans and Asians can, in such a Commonwealth, chart sanity and friendship for all peoples

of the world.

Race Relations in the Bahamas

By COLIN HUGHES

IN January the Bahamas, for the first time in many years, made the news—rather than the social pages of the London press, with a story that the Bahamian legislature had passed a resolution condemning racial discrimination in public places. To students of colonial affairs this was a case of the walls of Jericho coming down, for the Bahamas have acquired an unsavoury reputation for refusing to give hotel accommodation to distinguished Negro air passengers who have been stranded in Nassau for a night. The background to the story is a long one. Up to the time of the American Revolution the Bahamas were a small and thinly populated group of islands to the north of Cuba. After the Revolution several thousand Lovalists from the southern continental colonies brought their slaves and settled in the Bahamas. Thus the colony has a far larger white population (13 per cent) than any of the West Indian colonies to the south. Agriculture in the Bahamas has never been a great success, although at times tomatoes and pineapples have had a limited market in North America. Close proximity to the United States has always been the colony's greatest asset: during the U.S. Civil War for cotton and gun-running, during prohibition for bootlegging, and since then for tourism. Today Nassau, the capital with over onehalf the population, is competely dependent on tourist income, and resorts on a smaller scale are being built on some of the other islands.

As is the case with any colony where slavery existed, the population ranges the scale from pure European to pure African. Readers of Alec Waugh's brilliant novel, *Island in the Sun*, will remember the subtle distinctions of colour that pervaded society in Santa Marta, and that few white families lacked their racial skeleton in the closet. Similarly in Nassau the population fades gradually from black to white, but with opinion as to status running far stronger than biological fact. It appears that much of the racial tension comes from a deep psychological striving on the part of the 'near whites' and those 'who pass for white' to identify themselves with a white cause which is rendered belligerent and oppressive by their adherence. When the tourist industry developed in the 1920s and 1930s there can be little doubt that American visitors insisted on Jim Crow Hotels and public places; however it seems equally certain that without any tourists racial discrimination would have been maintained in the Bahamas. Thirty years later few Americans come expecting to find the segregation which they are trying to eliminate in their own country, but white racialists have taken up the cry that the abolition of discrimination would mean the ruin of tourism. Now they have to encounter a large and prosperous Negro and mixed middle class, and a working class which for the first time is becoming politically conscious.

It was on this note that Mr. Etienne Dupuch, editor and publisher of one of Nassua's two dailies, *The Tribune*, moved in the House of Assembly that the colonial government be asked to appoint a commis-

sion to investigate race relations and, if necessary, prepare legislation to prevent segregation. All coloured members and two whites voted for the resolution; the majority of whites voted to refer it to a committee of the House—the procedure by which most liberal proposals had been quietly killed in the past. That night and the next night crowds surrounded the House of Assembly and booed those white members whom they regarded as the leaders of the fight to keep discrimination. It was a small sign, but it proved sufficient. The Hotels Association promptly issued a statement denying that the hotels had ever practised discrimination and since then, with a few unpleasant exceptions, have practised what they promised. The House committee with a very hot issue in hand promptly reported back with a unanimous condemnation of discrimination in public places and this report was unanimously endorsed by the House. However it did not report on the advisability of legislation, and the committee died with the House in The two reform parties (the Progressive Liberal Party and the Bahamas Democratic League) both pledged their support for legislation during the Election campaign, and the new House of Assembly in July appointed a second committee 'to consider all matters affecting racial relations in the Colony, particularly to promote better integration in all its aspects' under the chairmanship of the Leader of the Government. There is little likelihood of this committee consisting of five white and two coloured members producing an acceptable report.

The P.L.P. and Racial Equality

Much of the struggle for racial equality is now in the political sphere. The P.L.P., an all-coloured party, made a very good showing in the elections by increasing their representation from one to six seats and polling one-third of the total votes. One of their election slogans was 'Don't Vote White, Vote Right' and their party organ, the weekly Herald, has been calling for a boycott of those white owned shops which refuse to employ Negroes except as messengers or cleaners. However they have yet to secure a substantial following outside Nassau, and the Herald has bitterly criticised 'the stupidity and blindness' of Negroes in the other islands where white candidates are still returned easily. The B.D.L. has an inter-racial membership and has tried to appeal to moderates of both races, but its relative lack of success at the polls makes one wonder how much popular support there is for an inter-racial co-operative position. The main question would now appear to be the length of time it will take the P.L.P. to secure a majority of voters in the 'Out Islands' (as the islands other than Nassau are called).

The first meetings of the new House¹ have not

¹ The new House of Assembly consists of 21 white conservatives, 6 P.L.P., 1 B.D.L. and 1 coloured independent; 8 represent Nassau and 21 the Out Island constituencies.

augured well for a smooth transition. The first few sittings were attended by large numbers of P.L.P. partisans who booed the Speaker, whose election was on a party vote, and other leading right-wing mem-The Governor subsequently forbade persons gathering in the vicinity of the House, and the P.L.P. protested his action in a telegram to the Secretary of of State. In his speech opening the new legislature the Governor, Lord Ranfurly, spoke of the need for franchise and taxation reform. The absence of income tax and the retention of an all-male property franchise (which allows less than 25 per cent of the adult population to vote) are basic tenets of the rightwing policy, and the immediate adjournment of the House from early August to mid-January 1957, in the face of heavy legislative programme supported by the Governor, has been taken to mean that white members are hoping for a new Governor more favourable to their cause. At the same time a commit-

tee of the House has been appointed to work for more responsible government—which presumably would mean the removal of Colonial Office control without any extension of internal democracy. Both P.L.P. and B.D.L. are supporters of greater responsibility in self-government provided that adult suffrage is introduced and plural voting abolished. The B.D.L. has also made much of the need for a redistribution of seats (the last one was in 1885) to prevent the liberal majority in Nassau being swamped by members returned from the corrupt 'rotten boroughs' of the Out Islands. Most are looking to January to see whether the 'Bay Street Boys,' as the white merchants' clique is known, have been chastened by recent experiences, or whether they will try to oppose reform vigorously and perhaps push the reformist elements further to the left. At present, by West Indian standards, they are moderate indeed.

Correspondence

To the Editor of VENTURE.

Kenya Africans and the Vote

Sir,-While attention is focused on the European and Asian elections in Kenya and British newspapers are devoting space to the results and their implications, the non-co-operation with the Government of the more conscious Africans is being overlooked. There are plenty of reasons for it in Government policies, especially on land, education and the Civil The more fundamental point however, which is incomprehensible to most people but nevertheless true, is that we shall never get co-operation on any terms which allow Europeans to remain in East Africa in anything but salaried posts as paid advisers. In other words, if European settlement is to continue in East Africa in anything like the present form, it can only be on the basis of force—as now. To talk about the possibility of a 'Lyttelton' type of coalition government persisting here after force is withdrawn is merely wishful thinking. So is the whole range of 'Capricorn' thinking.

I doubt whether we have time to explain this to a sufficient number of people. The Fabian Colonial Bureau should continue two types of operation—it can maintain, and if possible help to deepen, genuine mental contacts between conscious Europeans and conscious Africans, not with the intention of converting or even to any great degree influencing either, but merely in order to increase knowledge of the facts of the situation on either side; and, secondly, it can continue to try to convey the facts, thus gained, to

the more conscious persons in England.

Africans are not registering as voters for the African elections in March next year, because they suspect (and rightly) that the District Commissioners will impose a graduated poll tax on them if they reveal themselves as persons of property. Powers to levy such a tax do not yet exist but could be introduced and even now there is a graduated 'personal tax' in Kenya; under existing legislation this is paid only by Europeans and Asians, but it could easily be applied to Africans.

As £120 is a voting qualification for Africans

an African claiming a vote on income would have to pay 80s. if these provisions were made to apply to him, whereas under the existing African poll tax he only pays a sum, varying with his District, around 20s. As the ordinary African is not yet on a cash income basis in the sense that we are, 80s. cash is a substantial sum to him. True, if he has a cash income of £120 he could find £4; even quite ordinary Africans could raise £4 by selling some goats if they are near a suitable market and we want them to sell goats for slaughter to reduce the overstocking of the But these goats are their food reserve (and wife-buying currency) and, anyhow, if they did decide that they could sell, they would want that cash for something else-such as medicine, clothes or school fees-more urgently than the privilege of voting for one of a maximum of six representatives in the Legislative Council, where their representatives are in any case hopelessly in a minority.

—Yours, etc., Kenya.

A MEMBER.

To the Editor of VENTURE

Growing Crisis in Central Africa Sir,-Writing in the October VENTURE Mary Winchester says 'We should demand that the Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland representatives be elected ... on a communal roll with adult franchise, and 'In Nyasaland ... the case is clear for parity of African and non-African representation and for elections on a communal roll to replace indirect election.' It is not at all clear to me—perhaps it might be if Mrs. Winchester gave any reasons for these startling statements, but as it is one can only ask 'Since when have Fabians favoured communal electorates?' Even Mrs. Winchester says communal rolls should be 'of a transitory nature only.' Then why introduce them? If Tanganyika can introduce a franchise on a common roll basis, why should Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland follow Kenya? It is not as though separate electorates were already entrenched in Central Africa, so why start on the wrong foot? Your fo

MARJORIE NICHOLSON

6th October, 1956.

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Mauritius - A Forgotten Colony

By R. H. PARKER

WITHOUT doubt the island of Mauritius is one of the least-known of all British Colonies. Few English people seem ever to have heard of it; many of those who have think it is still a French Colony. It is to be hoped that the visit of Princess Margaret will have done something to dispel this ignorance.

The island, which has an area of about 720 square miles, lies about 500 miles east of Madagascar. It was captured by the British from the French in 1810 and in 1814 became a British colony. French influence, however, is still very strong. French, or a dialect of it, is the first language of the great majority of the inhabitants, with certain modifications the civil Code Napoleon remains in force, and the Roman Catholic Church is established. Both the National Anthem and the Marseillaise are played at official functions. When one day a band-leader forgot to play the latter, it was regarded by the French community almost as a deliberate insult.

The main problems of contemporary Mauritius are four:— (1) Too many people; (2) Too many different kinds of people; (3) a one-crop economy (sugar); (4) political advance. Mauritius is one of the most densely populated regions in the world. The average is 700 people to the square mile. In Plaines Wilhems, the main residential district, it is 1,900 which is as much as that of Greater London. Not only is the population large but it is increasing at a phenomenal rate. In 1901 it was 371,000; at the last census in 1952 it was 501,000; by 1972 it is expected to be over 800,000. The birth rate is one of the highest in the world, and it is still increasing. At the same time the death rate has decreased greatly, mainly because of the eradication of malaria. The population is increasing by over three per cent per annum, which is no less than five times the pre-war rate. It is doubtful whether the resources of the colony will continue to be able to support such a rapidly growing population. A Commission which reported in 1955 recommended high priority for the study of ways and means of increasing productivity, encouragement of emigration, and dissemination within the framework of the social services of advice on methods of family planning. The third recommendation has aroused strong opposition from the Roman Catholic authorities and seems unlikely to be adopted.

Despite its small size, Mauritius has an extremely varied population. The census figures divide the population into three groups: 'general' (about 30 per cent), Indian (66 per cent) and Chinese (4 per cent). The 'general' population consists of the descendants of the original French settlers, the descendants of the Negro slaves imported during the years 1645-1834, and the 'Creoles,' i.e. those of mixed European and African ancestry. Over three-quarters of the Indian population are Hindus; the remainder are Moslems. With the abolition of slavery, the freed Negroes refused to work on the plantations, so from the mid-1830s onwards Indian labourers were introduced. By 1910 this immigration had practically ceased. The

greater part of the present Indian population is therefore Mauritian-born. Broadly, the French form an upper class of professional men and landowners, the Creoles fill the less important positions in the government service, the Chinese and wealthier Indians are merchants, the poorer Indians work on the sugar plantations and the Negroes are general labourers and fishermen.

There is little love lost between the various races. The Europeans, Creoles and Negroes refer contemptuously to the Hindus as 'les Malabars' and regard them as pretentious upstarts. At the same time they are feared because of their numbers. Many of those of 'pure' French descent look down upon the Creoles and Negroes as descendants of slaves.

The value of the sugar exported annually from Mauritius represents on an average more than 97 per cent of the total value of all exports from the Colony. Thus the sugar industry governs the whole economy of the island. Since the war the Colony has been fortunate, sugar production has increased steadily and there has been an assured market in the United Kingdom. But there are obvious disadvantages in this over-dependence on one crop. A disastrous cyclone, such as that of 1945, may destroy almost an entire harvest. The prices of primary commodities in the world market are notoriously unstable.

Under a constitution of 1947 Mauritius is at present governed by a Governor aided by an Executive Council and a Legislative Council. Subject mainly to a literacy test all British subjects over 21 have the vote. In March 1956, however, Mr. Lennox-Boyd announced important constitutional changes which are planned to take effect this autumn. These were discussed in the May issue of 'Venture.' The most important change is the introduction of the form of proportional representation known as the single transferable vote.

What does the future hold for Mauritius? The advance towards greater self-government will surely go on but the colony is obviously too small and too weak economically to become eventually an independent Dominion. There seems only one solution, however far-fetched it may seem at this moment. This is integration within the United Kingdom, following the example of Malta. If that day ever comes, let us hope that the English people will by then know much more about their forgotten colony in the Indian Ocean.

BULK PURCHASE AND THE COLONIES By T. F. BETTS

This is a study of the effects at home and in the Colonies of Labour's policy of bulk purchase and long-term agreements.

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Guide to Books . . .

Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta 1830-1885

By K. Onwuka Dike (Clarendon Press, 30s.)

African history up till now has largely been the concern of the colonial historian, but in Dr. Dike we have one of the first of the national historians of Africa. He has recently been appointed Professor of History at the University College of Ibadan and there are indications in his present book that it is to be considered as an introductory volume

to further work on Nigerian history.

After a brief survey of West African trade prior to 1830 and a chapter on the traditional history and political organisation of the people of the Niger Delta, the author concentrates his attention on Bonny and adjacent trading communities in the Eastern Delta at the middle of the last century, when, after more than three hundred years of trade contacts with West Africa, European nations finally began to assume some sort of political control. At the beginning of the century possibly half the total West African trade in slaves and, later, a greater proportion still of the trade in palm oil, passed through Bonny and the contact between Europe and West Africa, which is the main subject of Dr. Dike's study, was here probably at its most concentrated.

In the Western Delta the river mouths were frequently obstructed, as they are today, by shallow bars and the area as a whole was still very much dominated by Benin which at that period did not encourage contacts with European traders who consequently favoured the more accessible rivers at Bonny and Calabar. Tribal wars and slave raiding continued in the Yoruba country and the hinterland of the Western Delta until the 1880's, by which time the Ibos of the East had been engaged for thirty years in the collection and marketing of palm oil which was exported through such ports as Bonny and Opobo, largely populated by Ibos who were once the slaves but now the equals or masters of the coast tribes. It may have been this early and profitable participation in the oil trade as well as the comparatively peaceful methods by which, Dr. Dike states, the Aro traders previously supplied large numbers of slaves for export, which afforded the Ibo country a period of peace and prosperity resulting in the very high population densities to be found between the lower Niger and the Cross river today.

During the period of the slave trade, Bonny had built up power and prosperity and a political organisation based on the requirements of the trade. For two hundred years African sellers and European buyers met on equal terms and European Governments paid little attention to either until the Abolition Act of 1807 led to the appearance on the coast of the British West African Squadron, which not only put a stop to the export of slaves, but inevitably interfered in trading matters and finally in local politics. The flag, at long last, was forced to follow trade, British Consuls were appointed, first at Fer-

nando Po and later at Lagos and Calabar, and in 1885 a Protectorate was declared over the coast from Lagos to the Rio del Rey.

Against this background of expanding trade and reluctant but inevitable political entanglement, Dr. Dike traces the internal history of Bonny and the adjacent states during an eventful half-century.

adjacent states during an eventful half-century.

When his authority was threatened by the numerous and wealthy lbo slave population, King Pepple of Bonny called in the aid of the West African Squadron, which action, as at Lagos, resulted ultimately in the assumption of political control by Britain. The astute, slave-born Ja-Ja, however, realised that power did not reside at Bonny or even in the person of its Amanyanabo (King), but was to be found wherever the palm oil from the interior could be brought to the European traders. In founding the rival port of Opobo he successfully usurped the power which had eluded the leaders of previous slave revolts who had tried to seize it within Bonny itself.

Dr. Dike has tapped original local sources both oral and documentary, but above all he looks at the available material from a fresh angle and sees African history in a new perspective. The trading communities of Brass and Bonny are compared with the Greek City States and the Long JuJu—by means of which the Aro traders extracted tribute in slaves from the Ibo tribes—is likened to the Delphic oracle. Opubu the Great, the Pepples and Ja Ja—the territories which they ruled were small, their subjects were few but, like Caractacus and Boadicea, they played the invaders at their own game and although they lost they became the heroes in the history of a new nation.

P. A. A.

Epitaph to Indirect Rule

By Ntieyong U. Akpan (Cassell. 12. 6d.)

Ntieyong U. Akpan has the unusual attitude of being, at the same time, unashamed of his own indebt-edness to individual Britons, and unimpressed by British attempts to modernise local government in Nigeria. This gives his work an absence of rancour and a freshness of approach that makes for pleasant reading. Mr. Akpan is a self-reliant man. He earned his two degrees of London University externally, with no formal education beyond that provided, up to the age of sixteen, by the Hope Waddell Institute, Calabar, and paid for by a missionary to whom, jointly with the author's deceased wife, the book is dedicated. He is averse to the idea of copying institutions. His arguments throughout are well maintained and if the book lays itself open to the criticism of comparing practice in Africa with theory about the U.K., the boot is so often on the other foot, that this lop-sidedness does not detract from its usefulness—especially to students of social administration. It does, however, leave a regret in the mind of the reader that more use could not have been made

of the services of English local councillors as advisers to their counterparts in Nigeria. Too much has been

left to conscientious civil servants.

Mr. Akpan is himself an eminent civil servant, but he lays his finger on the weakness of the administrative approach. The objects of local government are community development and political education and not the proliferation of local government officers. He therefore recommends concentration on village councils with advice and supervision by 'Co-ordinating agencies' at the divisional level. One senses a nostalgia for the friendly and effective D.O. and this is further evident in the shrewd opinion that it is goodwill rather than good conditions that will attract this type of man, who still has a part to play in developing administration.

An interesting chapter deals with representation which is sought not only by 'traditional' authorities but also by the new 'Clan' welfare organisations and educated classes. Mr. Akpan deplores 'politics' in local government. By this he must mean the nomination of local candidates by highly centralised political parties, for if all the interests he lists are represented on the councils, practical politics of a very lively kind cannot fail to show their head. After all, is not the basis of division in party affiliations that between those who wish to minimise taxation and consequently public services and those who demand public welfare whatever the price? Perhaps Mr. Akpan with his lively and vigorous approach falls into the error of thinking that leaders count for more than ends. This can only be true in the short run.

H.J.

The Colonial Office

by Sir Charles Jeffries (Allen and Unwin, 5s.)
This book is one of the New Whitehall series; the purpose is to give an authoritative description of the major departments of Whitehall. Its author the Deputy Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, has given a comprehensive study in human fashion of this most fascinating of all Government departments.

The Colonial Office is in many ways a family—clearly marked off from the domestic departments of State—and has its own intimate loyalties. It is evident Sir Charles feels this keenly and, in what is obviously a labour of love he conveys this in a charming manner. There is an interesting introduction of the early days of the Office in its old quarters over-

looking the Horse Guards Parade, with mention of Sydney Webb and Sydney Olivier among others. Such nostalgia is understandable.

The main theme of the book is the dynamic change that has occurred in the work of the Colonial Office. Not only has the organisation multiplied so that now there are two Departmental Under-Secretaries and nine Assistant Under-Secretaries to the Permanent Secretary, but he has beneath him 30 departments with all manner of ancillary specialist organisations ranging from Geodetic Surveys to Anti-Locust Research! In fact in less than a quarter of a century, a new doctrine of active stimulus of economic and social advance by H.M.G. has been developed.

Before 1940 and the Colonial Development Welfare Act, there was little or no long term development planning—Colonial governments had to be virtually self-supporting and 'priming the pump' was unknown. Sir Charls gives a lucid and graphic account of this

amazing post war expansion.

He has some penetrating comments upon the staffing of the Colonial Office and emphasizes the vital necessity of giving a feeling of security to the members of the Overseas Service, particularly where new African dominions are emerging, e.g. Nigeria and the Gold Coast. But many things are left unsaid, for instance he has no comment upon the advisability of promotion from the 'bush' to Whitehall, yet we have just seen a recent Governor of Nigeria become the top civil servant. Certainly there appears need for sabbatical years in the other direction, i.e. civil servants getting out to a colony.

Again, speaking of governors, he asserts they are not 'stooges of H.M.G.' but it would be interesting to have his views upon political appointments. In these African days, when intense nationalism is posing constantly the necessity of political judgements and decisions can civil servants graduating through secretariats cope with the affairs of a Kenya, Northern

Rhodesia or Uganda?

Perhaps these are unfair questions—Sir Charles was not asked to write a book on policy, nor yet history.

This is a lucid account, eminently readable, indeed fascinating in parts; some unkind readers may deem it somewhat complacent, but one gets the impression of a man of the utmost integrity who has enjoyed his life's work. Now that he has retired we can await his next book with some anticipation.

James Johnson, M.P.

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